

## NEW PUBLICATIONS.

HUMU AND THE DIARY OF A SUPERFLUOUS MAN. By IVAN GERGELYEVICH TURGENIEV. Translated from the Russian by HENRY GERSON. 12mo. \$1.31. FUNK & WAGNALS.

These two stories represent the two human conditions which in Russian life aroused all Turgenev's earliest sympathies—that of the serf to whom the caprice of his master meant fate, and that of the poor noble who is even now forbidden by his caste to work and to whom official life is not possible. In "Mumu" there is the mystery of unselfish devotion, of silent and hopeless suffering. The hero is a poor deaf and dumb serf who sees the woman he loves married to another by the will of the silly and idle creature, his owner; and who owes to her also the loss of the one thing left that is dear to him, Mumu, his dog. Her ladyship chooses to believe that the barking of the little animal disturbs her and degrades his death. No one of his fellow-servants dares to touch the pet of the gigantic dead-mute; but he bends to the inevitable, and his own hand destroys the thing he loves. The narrative of Mumu's death is a little tragedy in itself, told with a stern simplicity that is infinitely touching.

The story of Chukkaturin, the man to whom no natural road in life is open, whose love gets only ridicule for recognition, and whose awkward and ugly exterior hides the romance and the tenderness he is unable to utter, is set in another way. As he relates it he fails at himself with a bitter merriment and sneers at kindness while he yearns for it. In these stories, as in all Turgenev's novels, one finds the hopelessness, the relentless gloom of a Greek tragedy. Yet with all its sadness how different is the realism of the Russian from that of his imitators! His characters are vital, they suffer with a pathos that irresistibly touches the reader to sympathy. Those who would write in the same vein generally find his admirable manner, full of reserve, of self-restraint, of joyless patience; but while under this surface with Turgenev lie throbbing arteries and quivering flesh, his imitators offer us nothing more than lay figures in whose fortunes it is impossible to take any lively interest. They represent before us only poor phantasms of modern society, while Turgenev has explained to us a nation and shown the play of emotions that are as old as the world and as new as the hour in which they are born.

The translations of these stories are poor but the work has been done conscientiously; it is the misfortune of the translator that his appreciation of the English idiom is not always exact.

ENGLISH POETSES. By ERIC S. ROBERTSON. M. A. 12mo. pp. 381. Cassell & Co.

Mr. Robertson's series of critical and biographical studies may serve as a text-book for a young ladies' boarding-school where the standard of culture is not high; but readers whose tastes are more vigorous than those of curl-paper girls will find in these studies little that is of serious value. The author is afflicted with too keen a sense of the malleability of his "poetesses" first considering them as women and then as writers in a fashion that has been supposed to have ended with the race of Pinkertons.

Woman, he holds, has a comparative lack of imagination, her trustfulness, or disinclination to doubt, being one great cause of this lack, and a greater cause lying within her "springs of maternal feeling." Children, he declares, "are the best poems Providence meant women to produce . . . There is more life to satisfy a woman . . . therefore woman has not been impelled to such soul-searchings as man." These ingenuous explanations of woman's failure to produce as good poetry as man are characteristic of the kind of critic who always knows more about the designs of Providence than anybody else. Heredity and training—the two great factors which more than others must be taken into account in considering the differentiation of minds—are apparently as unknown to Mr. Robertson as to those Laura Matildas of the generation preceding his, who were accustomed to print nice little books of "Advice to Young Ladies by a Lady." The tendencies and habits of thought given by mother and daughter, the education and associations of women, have not been such as to cultivate the stronger and better poetic powers; it is hardly necessary to bring the unknown designs of Providence into the case. It may be safe to say that Providence meant men to be fathers; but many have found that character incompatible with the production of poetry of the highest order.

Mr. Robertson begins his series with a short essay on the "Matchless Orinda," the good and beautiful Katherine Phillips, who living in the loose days of the second Charles left a name much sweeter than her verse. He ends with Miss A. Mary F. Robertson, a young lady whose poetry while it is reasonably good in form lacks the force of real feeling.

The value of Mr. Robertson's criticism may be estimated by his praise of Mrs. Opie's silly little song,

"Go, youth, beloved, in distant glades!"

and by his mention of Longfellow's originality.

## Instruction

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